A SERMON

Preached before the

SOCIETY

FOR

Reformation of MANNERS,

AT

ST. JAMES'S, CLERKENWELL,

ON

MONDAY, JULY 7. 1760.

By GEORGE DOWNING, M. A.
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Chaplain to the Right Hon. the Earl of Dartmouth.

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the SOCIETY.

To which is added,
A ſuccinct account of their progreſs ſince Aug. 1757.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed, and ſold by J. FULLER, in Newgate-ſtreet; and by the Bookſellers of London and Weſtminſter, MDCCLX.

[Price Six-pence.]

TO THE

GENTLEMEN

OF THE

SOCIETY

FOR

Reformation of Manners,

THIS DISCOURSE

(made public at their REQUEST)

IS INSCRIBED

By their Obedient,

Humble Servant,

G. D.

A SERMON, &c.

St. MARK viii. 34.

And when He had called the people unto him, with his diſciples alſo, He ſaid unto them, Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me.

THE diſciples, it ſeems, did not as yet underſtand the deſign of our Lord's coming upon earth, nor were thoroughly inſtructed concerning the nature of that kingdom of his, which was to be ſet up amongſt men: They ſeem hitherto to have looked for a kingdom that was to come *with obſervation*, that was to appear with outward pomp and grandeur, and that the Prince of this kingdom, inſtead of miniſtring, and giving *his life a ranſom for many*, was *to be miniſtred unto:* Accordingly we are told in the verſes preceding the text, that when

our Lord *began to teach them, that the Son of Man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief prieſts and ſcribes, and be killed, Peter took him, and began to rebuke him,* ſaying, (as it is added in St. Matthew's goſpel) *Be it far from thee, Lord; this ſhall not be unto thee. But when* our Lord *had turned about, and looked on his diſciples, he rebuked Peter, ſaying, Get thee behind me, ſatan; for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of* GOD, *but the things that be of men* — thou conſidereſt not, that I cannot otherwiſe promote the glory of GOD in the ſalvation of mankind, than by my own perſonal ſufferings and death; and thou thyſelf alſo wouldſt enter into happineſs and glory, without enduring the croſs.

From whence our Lord took occaſion to inſtruct them more fully concerning the *ſpiritual* nature of his kingdom. *And when he had called the people unto him, with his diſciples alſo, he ſaid unto them, Whoſoever will come after me,* will be my

true diſciple, *let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me.*

The text leads us to inquire into theſe three particulars—

Firſt, What it is for a man to *deny himſelf:*

Secondly, —to *take up his croſs:* and

Thirdly, —to *follow Chriſt.*

I will conſider each of theſe in its order. —— And may the *Spirit* of truth be with us, and imprint upon our hearts, whatſoever ſhall be ſpoken agreable to the *Word* of truth!

Firſt then, Let us conſider, What it is for a man to *deny himſelf.*

1ſt, A man, who would be a diſciple of Chriſt, muſt renounce his own *Wiſdom.* Let me not be miſtaken here, as if I ſaid, for a man to be Chriſt's diſciple, he muſt give up, or renounce his *Reaſon:* This is very far from what I mean; for Reaſon,

when it acts in ſubſervience to divine Grace, and does not uſurp over it, is certainly a wiſe and good guide: But what I would be underſtood to ſay, is clearly and fully expreſſed in the oracles of truth, as it is written, in the 3d chap. of the 1ſt epiſtle of St. Paul to the Corin. and at the 18th ver. *If any man ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe.* A ſenſe of our natural blindneſs, and ignorance concerning the things of GOD, is the firſt ſtep towards true Wiſdom. Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to be the light thereof, and the greateſt ſcholar ſtands as much in need of this divine light, as the moſt illiterate peaſant; for every ſon of fallen Adam, however learned and wiſe he may be with regard to *ſecular* matters, is in a ſtate of *ſpiritual* blindneſs, until the *ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe* upon him, and enlighten the darkneſs of his underſtanding. *If any man*, ſaith the apoſtle, *think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* The being wiſe in our own conceits, and exalting of human Reaſon above its proper ſphere is ut-

terly deſtructive of the ſpirit and temper, which the goſpel preſcribes. Our Lord tells us, that *except* we *become as little children*, we *ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*: As therefore in other things, ſo alſo in this particular, muſt we reſemble them, in being of an humble, teachable temper, and, as having yet all to learn, in being contented to be taught by the word of GOD. *As new-born babes*, ſaith St. Peter, *deſire the ſincere milk of the word.* Every thought which exalteth itſelf againſt the *ſimplicity that is in Chriſt*, muſt be abaſed, and we muſt be brought to ſit, with humble Mary, at the feet of Chriſt, to be taught of him, *what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of* GOD. The pride and ſelf-ſufficiency of the human Uuderſtanding is ever ready to incline us *to think more highly* of ourſelves *than we ought to think*; that we are *rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing*, at the ſame time that we are *wretched and miſerable*,

and poor, and blind, and naked. Such is *naturally* the blindneſs of our underſtandings. But when the ſinner comes to be *awakened*, and to ſee things *in the light of* GOD, he no longer leans to his own wiſdom and underſtanding, but gladly embraces the truth as it is in Jeſus, according as it is revealed in the written word of GOD: And though he find therein *ſome things hard to be underſtood*, and which his poor, finite capacity cannot comprehend; this does not in the leaſt ſhake or ſtagger his belief, becauſe he knows, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, that *the fooliſhneſs of* GOD *is wiſer than men*, and that *Chriſt of* GOD *is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs.*

2dly then, The diſciple of Chriſt denies himſelf, by renouncing not only his own wiſdom, but his own *righteouſneſs* alſo.

It is painful to fleſh and blood, to the proud heart of the carnal man, to lay aſide every claim, to give up every pretence of being juſtified by his works; to be forced to come to GOD ſtript of all

merit, and pleading only the merits of Another for acceptance. Such preaching of *Chriſt crucified*, is indeed ſtill *unto the Greeks*, thoſe who are wiſe in their own eyes, *fooliſhneſs: But unto them which are called*, it is the higheſt wiſdom. No ſooner is a man thoroughly awakened to ſee and feel his loſt, ſinful, helpleſs ſtate, but he gladly accepts of a *Redeemer's* righteouſneſs. Can we indeed *practically* believe, that *the wrath of* GOD *is revealed againſt all unrighteouſneſs*, and that He is *of purer eyes than to behold* the leaſt *iniquity*, without diſpleaſure, and yet entertain a thought that ſuch polluted wretches, as we are, could be accepted on account of any thing we have done, or can do, by a GOD of ſuch unſpotted purity, and inflexible juſtice? Surely it is impoſſible: The principle, which leads us to that exceſſive pride, muſt be an utter ignorance of ourſelves, a practical disbelief of the wrath and juſtice of GOD, and a wretched thoughtleſſneſs, at leaſt, concerning the invaluable price of the

blood of the Son of GOD, of GOD *himſelf* in the *human* nature, ſhed for ſinners. Let us but once feel ourſelves juſtly ſubject to the wrath of an offended GOD, and deſerving to be caſt for ever from his holy preſence, we ſhall no longer ſtand upon terms of our own righteouſneſs, but deſire only, that GOD would *remember* our *ſins and* our *iniquities no more*.

To be convinced of ſin is the firſt ſtep in the chriſtian life: Without a deep and thorough conviction of the guilt and pollution of ſin, and that we have thereby made GOD our enemy, and are become children of wrath, we cannot underſtand fully the neceſſity of Chriſt's being made a ſacrifice for ſin, neither can we ſet a due value upon the unſearchable riches of his redeeming grace. A ſenſe of our wretched ſinfulneſs leads us to the *fountain opened for ſin, and for uncleanneſs*; and *the law*, which is *weak thro' the fleſh*, is *our ſchoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt*, that by virtue of his ſinleſs obedience, and meritorious death, the righteouſneſs of the law

may be fulfilled in us. Accordingly, the awakened ſinner, when he perceives himſelf under the ſentence of condemnation, a captive to ſin and ſatan, and expoſed to all the ſtorms of wrath, which muſt neceſſarily fall on him from an infinitely juſt and ſin-avenging GOD, were he to remain unpardoned, haſtens to be delivered. In the bitterneſs of his ſoul he cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* He looks no longer to himſelf for matter of acceptance with GOD, for he knows that in him *dwelleth no good thing*, but is obedient to the call of him, who hath commanded, ſaying, *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved.* He looks unto Chriſt, and in him he finds ſalvation. By the faith which is given him, he is ſaved from the curſe of the law, the wrath of GOD, the tyranny of ſatan, the dread of hell, the guilt, the pollution, the power and dominion of ſin. The faith, which aſſures him that Chriſt hath died for his ſins, and made reconciliation with GOD for him, fills his heart

with peace, and love to him, *who hath given himſelf for* him: And the ſenſe of theſe free and unmerited favours ſo fully poſſeſſes his ſoûl, that, with his wiſdom and righteouſneſs, he renounces alſo his *Will.*

But this conſideration comes more properly under our ſecond head of diſcourſe, wherein it was propoſed to enquire,

Secondly, what it is for the diſciple of Chriſt to *take up his croſs.*

The *croſs*, under the Roman government, was the moſt ſervile and painful of all puniſhments; and *that*, whereunto the Lord Jeſus was himſelf, for the ſake of us ſinners, to become obedient: Wherefore, in ſcripture-language, the *taking up the croſs* denotes the patiently ſubmitting to any pains, troubles and calamities that GOD ſhall be pleaſed to lay upon us, and even to death itſelf, if we ſhould be called to ſuffer for the ſake of Chriſt.

The ſtate of a chriſtian is a ſtate of warfare, he has no time therefore to be ſupine

and ſlothful, but he muſt always watch, leſt his enemies ſhould get the advantage over him. He muſt *endure hardneſs, as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt, the captain of* his *ſalvation*, who was made *perfect through ſufferings.*

Indeed, unto the true believer, the *yoke* of Chriſt *is eaſy, and* his *burden light*; yea, he glories in the *croſs* of Chriſt, *by which the world is crucified unto him, and he unto the world.* He is *crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs* he *lives*; *yet not* he, *but Chriſt liveth in* him: *and the life which* he *lives in the fleſh*, he *lives by the faith of the Son of* GOD, *who loved* him, *and gave himſelf for* him. By the power of this victorious faith, he dies to ſin and ſelf, and lives to holineſs and GOD. He has *learned in whatſoever ſtate* he is, *therewith to be content*, and he *can do all things thro' Chriſt who ſtrengtheneth* him. Is he in a ſtate of poverty and diſtreſs? he remembers him, who, *tho' he was rich, yet for* his *ſake became poor* and afflicted, and rejoices in the will of God towards him. Is he viſited with ſickneſs or pain of body? his

ſoul proſpers, and is happy ſtill in him, who *himſelf took our infirmities, and bare our ſickneſſes.* Is he evil ſpoken of *falſly* for the name of Chriſt? he is comforted with the remembrance of that divine precept, which bids him *rejoice in that day, yea, leap for joy.* Do his neighbours and friends, and near relations forſake him on this account? he finds to his unſpeakable comfort and refreſhment, that *when* his *father and* his *mother forſake* him, *the Lord taketh* him *up.* Every ſtate, wherein GOD places the chriſtian, he finds that to be the beſt for him. Is he called to *take up* his *croſs,* even to martyrdom? this is *the crown of* his *rejoicing,* that his *life is hid with Chriſt in* GOD, and that *when Chriſt, who is* his *life, ſhall appear, then ſhall* he *alſo appear with him in glory.* The way of the *croſs* is the way to *glory:* And by what means ſoever it pleaſes GOD to exerciſe the believer's faith and patience, he receives the diſpenſation with thankfulneſs, being fully aſſured that *all things* ſhall *work together for* his *good;* and that *all things are his,* whether proſ-

perity or adverſity, eaſe or pain, ſickneſs or health, *life or death, or things preſent or things to come*, that *all are his*, becauſe *he is Chriſt's, and Chriſt is* GOD's. Thus whoſoever will be Chriſt's diſciple, he muſt *deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow* him.

Thirdly then, What is it *to follow Chriſt?*

To follow Chriſt, is to be made like unto him, *to be conformed to his image*, the having *our old man crucified with him that the body of ſin may be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin*, but *like as Chriſt was raiſed from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.* It is to imitate him, and to *be holy, as He is holy, in all manner of converſation.*

GOD *hath choſen us in Chriſt*, ſaith the apoſtle, *that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love.* It is in vain therefore to talk of *being in Chriſt*, and at the ſame time to *live as without him* in

the world. The true believer partakes of his ſpirit, and is endued with his holy tempers. He is one with Chriſt and Chriſt with him. As the branch partakes of the fatneſs of the vine, ſo does the chriſtian of the fulneſs of Chriſt; for, ſaith St. John, *Of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace.* He is the ſource and fountain, from whence the believer derives every degree of life and holineſs. Being united to Chriſt, *the true light*, he borrows from him that light, which he lets *ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee* his *good works, and glorify* his *Father, who is in heaven.* Like unto his Saviour, he is meek, lowly of heart, gentle, and eaſy to be intreated: No inordinate affection, or unruly paſſion is found to dwell in his breaſt, becauſe the love of Chriſt hath expelled it. Walking in the ſteps of his Maſter, he goeth about doing good, having a zeal for GOD's glory, and for the welfare of his fellow-creatures. And there is nothing at any time ſo burthenſome and painful to him, as to find a thought ariſing in his mind contrary to the holi-

neſs of GOD, and the honour of his bleſſed Maſter. The earneſt language of his heart is, O that I could ceaſe from ſin, and never more offend him, who hath died for me, in thought, word, or deed! *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo longeth* his *ſoul after* the enjoyment of his GOD; and his longing ſoul crieth out, *O when ſhall I come and appear before* GOD?

We ſee then, that the teſt of our being Chriſt's diſciples, is *the denying ourſelves, and taking up the croſs, and following him.* But, according to this rule, how many are there, who profeſs the name of Chriſt, whoſe religion, in that day, when the hearts of all men ſhall be diſcloſed, will be found vain and fruitleſs?

By way therefore of applying what has been now delivered, I ſhall make a ſhort addreſs to two or three ſorts of people.

And *firſt*, I would addreſs thoſe, who have the *form only*, and not the *power* of godlineſs.

Nothing ſhort of *repentance toward* GOD, *and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, can bring us into a ſtate of Salvation, which repentance and faith imply a real converſion of the ſoul from ſin to holineſs, and a ſincere acceptance of Chriſt, as our *only*, yet *all-ſufficient* Saviour.

I will ſuppoſe that ye are free from ſcandalous ſins, groſs, enormous tranſgreſſions; your lives may be in the ſight of men without blame —— but are your hearts pure, and holy? Are they *athirſt for* GOD? Do you hate and deteſt your ſins, becauſe they have made GOD your enemy, and were the occaſion of Chriſt's ſufferings? Or rather, ſo that ye do but appear fair to men, and bring not a reproach upon you by *outward* ſins, are you not careleſs and indifferent about the ſins of your *heart?* Have you ever ſo much as conſidered how exceeding hateful ſin muſt be in the ſight of GOD, which could not be otherwiſe expiated than by the precious blood of his only begotten Son? Have you ever felt a ſenſe of GOD's diſpleaſure, on account of ſin, or been ſen-

ſible of your meetneſs for eternal puniſhment? On the contrary; have all theſe heart-felt truths appeared to you as matter of fancy and deluſion? Of this you may be aſſured, that however you may ſeem to yourſelves to be bringing forth the fruits of righteouſneſs, the Ax has never yet been laid to the root of the tree; you have never yet examined the ground of your hearts, nor ſeen how alienated they are from the life and power of godlineſs. You yet love ſin, but would not appear ſinful: Ye are more fearful perhaps of the ſhame that may ariſe from man, in committing what is wrong, than of the diſhonour which is done to GOD. You may often take the name of Chriſt into your lips; but do you love and reverence it with your hearts? You may come to church; but is it out of form and cuſtom, or with a view of meeting GOD there, and confeſſing with all humility before him, that ye are miſerable offenders, and rely only on the merits of Chriſt for pardon? Probably you do not take the name of the Lord in vain; you may abſtain from

all profaneneſs: but do you abſtain from all detraction, and evil-ſpeaking, *fooliſh talking and jeſting?* You do not, with the profligate, curſe and blaſpheme GOD; but do you not murmur and repine againſt his providence, whenever any thing falls out contrary to your worldly ſchemes and intereſt? How then can *You* be ſaid to *deny yourſelves*, to *take up your croſs*, and *follow Chriſt?* And yet without this, He himſelf aſſures you, ye cannot be *his diſciples*.

But if the formal profeſſor be not a diſciple of Chriſt; where *ſecondly* ſhall the *ungodly* and the *careleſs ſinner* appear?

Would to GOD, that you, who yet live in the wilful commiſſion of your ſins, were either frightened from it by the terrible threatenings denounced againſt you in the word of GOD: Or rather, ſweetly led into the way of holineſs and duty by the *conſtraining love* of Chriſt! What! ſhall Chriſt have died for you, and will ye trample upon his precious blood? Shall he have purchaſed pardon for you, and will ye not accept it? Shall he have bought a

crown of never-fading glory for you, and will ye rather chooſe to have your portion with the devil and his angels, and dwell in everlaſting miſery? Have pity upon your own ſouls. Let GOD be glorified in your Salvation. *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* You know not whether you may have another offer of grace and mercy. *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of ſalvation.* Can you warrant, if you go to bed this night with your ſins *unpardoned*, that you ſhall not awake on the morrow in a dreadful eternity? — And then it would be too late to knock: The door of mercy would be *for ever* ſhut. *Seek ye* then *the Lord, while he may be found, call ye upon him, while he is near: Return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon* you, *and to our* GOD, *for he will abundantly pardon*; He will pardon all your tranſgreſſions, be they ever ſo great and heinous, and give you free and plenteous *redemption* in the blood of Jeſus, *the Lamb of* GOD *that taketh away the ſins of the world.*

As for you, *Thirdly*, who have experienced *this redemption*, and are *following Chriſt*, let me exhort you, in one word, to *preſs toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of* GOD *in Chriſt Jeſus*. Endeavour to love Chriſt better, and to keep up a more frequent intercourſe with him; and you will become more like him, and follow him more cloſely; as it is natural for us to catch the ways and manners of Thoſe whom we are fond of, and converſe moſt with. Deny yourſelves, and take up your croſs *daily*. Whatever occurence befalls you throughout the day, however diſpleaſing it may be to fleſh and blood, receive it with thankfulneſs, as being the will of GOD concerning you. Deſire not to chooſe for yourſelves, but caſt yourſelves with calmneſs and reſignation into the hands of your heavenly Father. Rejoice in every opportunity which is given you of croſſing your own deſires, and of ſacrificing your wills to the will of GOD. Let this be the conſtant language of your hearts, as it was that of your Saviour, "*Father, not my will, but thine be done.*" Be ye followers of Others, *as*

they follow Chriſt, but let him be your *chief* and *ſupreme* Example; and be ye conformed more and more to his divine image, riſing higher and higher into his likeneſs, until ye come unto *the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*, until ye *be filled with all the fulneſs of* GOD.

Laſtly, As for Thoſe among you, Brethren, in particular, whoſe concern for the honour of GOD has inclined you to form yourſelves into a Society, with a view of ſtemming the torrent of Profaneneſs and Iniquity, which, like a deluge, had well nigh overflown this great Metropolis, I heartily wiſh you good ſpeed in the name of the Lord.

It is good, ſaith the Apoſtle, *to be zealouſly affected always in a* good *thing*: Were your care and Solicitude engaged about the leſs material points of Religion, ſuch as the *mere modes* and *forms* of Worſhip, Wherein ſurely men may differ, and yet be equally ſound in the Faith of Chriſt: One might fear, leſt Zeal exerted to ſuch a purpoſe ſhould tend

rather to the hindrance than the furtherance of the Goſpel: But as your whole concern is employed upon the weightier matters thereof; How you may put a ſtop to Vice and Immorality, and recover the honour which is due to the Laws of God and of the Land; (wherein all good men of every perſuaſion are equally concerned) There is the greateſt reaſon to expect, that the Intereſt of Religion will be promoted.

It appears indeed, that a conſiderable check has been already given to the progreſs of Vice in this city. That *Gaming*, and *Common-Swearing* have in ſome meaſure been reſtrained; and *the profanation of the Lord's-Day*, more eſpecially, ſo far ſuppreſſed, that many perſons in different parts of *London*, who were uſed (in defiance of the Laws) to expoſe their goods to ſale, and exerciſe their *common* callings on that ſacred Day, now ſell no more, nor employ themſelves about their *ordinary* buſineſs. As God hath therefore been pleaſed hitherto to proſper *your work and labour of love*; May we not humbly hope by the conti-

nuance of his bleſſing on your endeavours, and the ready concurrence of the Magiſtrates, that the cauſe of *Profaneneſs* and *Immorality* will daily loſe ground, and *That* of *Virtue* and *Religion* become in the end happily triumphant? But, for the better promoting of your Deſign, It were to be wiſhed, that Thoſe, who have a zeal for Religion, but whom it may not ſuit to afford their *perſonal* aſſiſtance, would at leaſt contribute ſomewhat of their *Subſtance*, towards defraying thoſe conſiderable, (yet neceſſary) expences, which *the Society* muſt be at in the management of *proſecutions*, the printing of *Extracts of Acts of Parliament*, and Tracts of a *religious* nature &c.

I would now add a word or two of exhortation, on occaſion of our preſent meeting: But *the Rules* of your Society have ſo fully anticipated what I might have had to offer for this purpoſe, that I need do little more than juſt recall a a few of *your own rules* to your remembrance——Your *firſt* Rule orders, that

you " begin and end with prayer to " Almighty GOD for his direction and bleſſing"——You will do well indeed always to remember, that This is the hinge on which all your Succeſs muſt turn; for, without the direction and bleſſing of GOD, the wiſeſt counſels cannot but prove abortive, and the ableſt undertakings fail. Your *ſeventh* Rule directs, that " None be admitted " Members of your Society, but ſuch " are deemed to be truly religious, " and well-affected to his Majeſty King " George" — Unleſs this rule alſo be inviolably obſerved, You cannot well expect to meet with ſucceſs; for, except the Members concerned be men of Religion, it may with too much propriety be objected, *Thou that makeſt thy boaſt of the Law, thro' breaking of the Law diſhonourſt thou God?* And as for Loyalty to the King; This reſts upon the ſame foundation with our duty to GOD: for the Apoſtle, after having told us to *fear God*, immediately ſubjoins this command alſo, *Honour the King*. And we indeed of this happy Nation have pecu-

liar reaſon to bleſs GOD, for having placed on the Throne of theſe Kingdoms a Prince to whom not Conſcience only, but Inclination alſo muſt lead us to pay a dutiful regard: For if a zealous maintaining of the *Proteſtant* Religion; If a tender concern for the rights and liberties of his people; If the due exerciſe of Juſtice, Mercy, Moderation, and Clemency can excite our regard, ſurely we can never be wanting in honour to the Perſon, and in dutiful ſubmiſſion to the Authority of our preſent Sovereign. Your *eleventh* Rule directs, that "before any "Offender is proſecuted, he be reaſoned "with and warned, to prevent, if poſ-"ſible, the neceſſity of proſecution"— The force and propriety of this rule likewiſe evidently appears: for both *Reaſon* and *Religion* teach us to be merciful; And where ever mild and gentle means will avail to correct the Offender, there never to make uſe of ſuch as are harſh and corroſive.

There is ſtill one thing farther, ſet forth in your *printed Declaration*, that I beg leave to take notice of as what cannot but afford a real ſatisfaction to all

who wiſh well to your Undertaking—which is this, that in thoſe very caſes, where you cannot, without a manifeſt injury to the Cauſe of Religion, forbear to proſecute the *obſtinate* Offender, you do not then " make any property of " the conviction-money, either for your " 'own private uſe, or for the uſe of the " Society"—For by this means you will provide, as far as lies in your power, that *your good be not evil ſpoken of*, or your zeal for ſerving the cauſe of Religion ſuſpected to ariſe from a motive of ſerving yourſelves. May you always be thus minded; May you ever act with a ſingle eye to the glory of GOD, and the welfare of your Fellow-creatures; And may the Work of the LORD proſper yet more abundantly in your hands! *Finally, Brethen, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; If there be any Virtue and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things: And the God of peace ſhall be with you.*

FINIS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SEVERAL having been deterred from engaging in this good deſign from the diſreputation which ignorance and malice has affixed to the neceſſary work of giving *Informations*. We cannot better obviate this objection, than by obſerving in the words of the late *Ld. Bp. of Chicheſter*, " That Almighty GOD expects that " his honour ſhould be righted, and his " juſtice vindicated amongſt men by the " making of good laws, and the vi- " gourous execution of them. And pri- " vate perſons may *obſerve*, *reprove*, *diſ-* " *cover* and *complain* as occaſion ſhall " require; and indeed *without this* little " good is to be done; becauſe thoſe that " have the authority to puniſh evils, have " ſeldom the opportunity of *obſerving* " them: ſo that the work of reformation " depends as much upon the *due Infor-* " *mation*, as upon the due execution of " the laws. And in this caſe to be called " an *Informer* will be ſo far from mak- " ing any man Odious, in the judgment " of ſober perſons, that it will tend to " his Honour; while he makes it appear " by an unblamable behaviour that he " doth it purely for the glory of GOD, " and the good of mankind."

The former Society for Reformation of Manners, was ſet on foot, Anno 1695.

The preſent Society began, or rather revived, in Auguſt 1757.

Since that time, upwards of Six Thouſand perſons have been brought to juſtice for divers wilful and habitual offences, particularly for

The Profanation of the Lord's Day,
Profane Curſing and Swearing,
Unlawful Gaming, and for
Keeping Lewd and Diſorderly Houſes.

In conjunction with the unpleaſant work of carrying on proſecutions, they have diſtributed about Twelve Thouſand books of Inſtructions and Diſuaſives from vice and profaneneſs, with thirty thouſand extracts of acts of parliament, and printed notices, to offenders, in order to prevent, if poſſible, the neceſſity of giving informations.

The expences of the ſociety, to this time, amount to Two Hundred and Twenty Pounds.

Juſtice-Hall, Old-Bailey,
Auguſt 1760,
Where the Society meet every
Monday Evening.